

Environmental Management Systems for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses: Pilot Project

Description

U.S. EPA has provided cooperative grants to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) to train and assist small and medium-size businesses in developing or improving an EMS using the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) guidance document, "Improving Environmental Performance and Compliance: 10 Elements for Effective Environmental Management Systems." The Texas pilot will select small and medium-size businesses along the U.S./Mexico border to develop EMSs to assess their environmental impacts and compliance. It is anticipated that through the EMS, the facilities will develop a more proactive and systematic approach to the management of their environmental performance. The Cal/EPA pilot will focus on developing EMSs for small and medium-size U.S. businesses that buy products from Mexican cottage industries identified as possible sources of environmental contamination in the industrial area of Tijuana (Otay)/San Diego (Otay Mesa). This pilot has the potential to help California reduce transborder pollution and improve the environmental performance of selected U.S. businesses and ultimately the cottage industry suppliers in Mexico.

Goals/Outcomes

To share Texas' and California's experience in developing different implementation strategies for a common EMS pilot project in response to the respective needs of the two states. To explore small and medium-size businesses' interest in EMSs.

Key Questions

- ☐ What should be the strategic plan to build on the current experience in the pilot to link with other complementary transborder projects funded by U.S. federal or state agencies, Mexico or international organizations?
- ☐ What motivates small businesses to stay the course in the pilot and follow through with developing and implementing an EMS?
- ☐ What are the major elements of an EMS of interest to small businesses?
- ☐ What type of delivery and format is most effective in presenting technical assistance to small businesses?
- ☐ What performance measures are the best indicators of improved environmental performance for small businesses and what is an effective vehicle for communicating those results to the public?

Presenters

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